

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00

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INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA PRIORITY

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S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 10933

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT ET

SUBJECT: SAFETY OF IMPERIAL FAMILY AND POLITICAL PRISONERS

REF: STATE 215223

1. APPRECIATE WASHINGTON VIEWS REFTEL. I AM PLEASED THAT DEPT IS WILLING TO RUN SOME CAREFULLY CALCULATED RISKS FOR US-ETHIOPIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS IN ORDER TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO FORESTALL EXECUTIONS, EVEN THOUGH WE CANNOT BE SURE EXECUTIONS ARE REALLY BEING PLANNED. WE CONTINUE TO HEAR RUMORS AND REPORTS, SOME ALLEGEDLY SOURCED TO DIRG MEMBERS, OF INTENTION TO EXECUTE SOME PRISONERS AROUND

SEPT 13. REMOVAL OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF IMPERIAL FAMILY TO AKAKI PRISON IS CONFIRMED. THERE IS BENIGN EXPLANATION FOR THIS- TO PREVENT ANY ATTEMPTS TO RELEASE THEM BY FORCE FROM RELATIVELY INSECURE PALACE PREMISES DURING POSSIBLE DISTURBANCES SEPT 13-BUT MANY DIPLOMATS (ESPECIALLY BRITS) ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED THAT INTENTION IS OTHERWISE. SOME POLITICAL PRISONERS FROM MENELIK PALACE ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO AKAKI.

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2. WE BELIEVE THAT SENSIBLE MEMBERS OF DIRG MUST ALREADY KNOW OF

SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS ON US AID IF EXECUTIONS TAKE PLACE. HOWEVER, WE CANNOT ASSESS IRRATIONALITY FACTOR IN THINKING OF SOME FACT THAT THEY MAY FEEL THEY GOT AWAY WITH EXECUTIONS OF SIXTY IN NOVEMBER, COMBINED WITH LACK OF ADVERSE PUBLICITY ON DEATH OF EMPEROR (WIDELY RUMORED TO HAVE BEEN KILLED, ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT REACH THIS CONCLUSION ON PRESENT EVIDENCE) MAY EMBOLDEN DIRG TO DECIDE ON "FINAL SOLUTION" FOR SOME POLITICAL PRISONERS. IN ADDITION, WE WOULD POINT OUT THAT IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT DIRG HAS DELIBERATELY FLOATED RUMORS OF IMPENDING EXECUTIONS AS TRIAL BALLOON TO SEE IF VIGOROUS REACTIONS AS PRODUCED, IN ORDER TO ASSESS CONSEQUENCES. SOME OF US HAD ALREADY REACHED CONCLUSION THAT A PORTION OF RAMPANT RUMORS ON OTHER SUBJECTS IS DUE TO DELIBERATE RUMORMONGERING BY DIRG MEMBERS- AS FORM OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY AGAINST OTHER DIRG FACTIONS AND AS TRIAL BALLOONS. THIS OF COURSE ARGUES THAT FOREIGN REACTIONS TO THESE RUMORS SHOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY VIGOROUS SO THAT, IF THEY ARE TRIAL BALLOONS, THE DIRG WILL BE DISSUADED FROM ACTING.

3. I TOOK OPPORTUNITY TODAY TO OUTLINE US CONCERNS, AND THOSE OF OTHERS IN DIPLOMATIC CORPS, TO SUDANESE AMB AND HE SAID HE WOULD TELEGRAPH KHARTOUM RECOMMENDING THAT A STATEMENT SHOULD BE DELIVERED THERE TO ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR.

4. I ALSO CALLED TODAY ON DEAN OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS, CAMEROON AMB DICKO, WHO IS INDEPENDENT AND VIGOROUS PERSON, AND IS ONE WHO TOOK LEAD IN DELIVERING AFRICAN DEMARCHE ON SIMILAR SUBJECT LAST YEAR, MENTIONED PARA THREE REFTEL. DICKO WAS ALREADY SEIZED OF THE PROBLEM, AND IS TRYING TO SEE THE FONMIN TODAY TO EXPRESS CONCERN. HE WILL ALSO SEE OAU SECRETARIAT AND RECOMMEND THAT THEY PASS MESSAGE TO OAU CHAIRMAN IDI AMIN (NOW IN ROME) SUGGESTING THAT HE FIND WAY TO GIVE IMMEDIATE WARNING TO EPMG ABOUT EXECUTIONS. DICKO TOLD ME HE WAS ASSURED BY A DIRG MEMBER THIS MORNING THAT THE DIRG "HAS ABANDONED" IDEA OF EXECUTING POLITICAL PRISONERS. DICKO AND I AGREED THAT WHILE THIS MAY BE GOOD NEWS (ALBEIT NOT DEFINITIVE) IT ALSO CONFIRMS THAT DIRG HAD SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED EXECUTIONS. DICKO SAYS HE WILL CONSIDER OTHER ACTIONS IN ADDITION TO ABOVE, INCLUDING REQUESTING MEETING WITH PMAC CHAIRMAN, PERHAPS EVEN MOBILIZING AFRICAN EMBASSADORS TO GO ALONG IF THIS SEEMS WARRANTED AFTER HE TALKS TO FONMIN.

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5. BRITISH EMBASSY SAYS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HAS ALREADY SENT MESSAGE TO EPMG. IT WOULD CERTAINLY BE GOOD TO STIMULATE OTHER SUCH ORGANIZATIONS TO DO LIKEWISE. CALLING IN ETHIOPIAN CHARGE IS ALSO GOOD MOVE.

6. LUCKILY, ALL WEST EUR AMBASSADORS AND CHARGES ARE TO BE PRESENT AT FAREWELL LUNCH TODAY FOR BRITISH AMB, AND I WILL EXPLAIN USG CONCERNS TO THEM. I WILL CALL ON YUGOSLAV AMB THIS AFTERNOON

BECAUSE I FEEL HE IS ONE SOCIALIST REPRESENTATIVE WHO MIGHT FEEL HE
COULD WEIGH IN WITH EPMG. WILL REPORT THESE CONVERSATIONS LATER TODAY.

7. I HAVE SO FAR BEEN USING IN MY STATEMENTS TO EPMG THE KEY
WORDING AUTHORIZED IN STATE 209447 THAT EXECUTIONS "WOULD
HAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR" US-EPMG RELATIONS. DURING ANNIVERSARY
FESTIVITIES BEGINNING TOMORROW I MAY HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO REITERATE
CONCERNS TO EPMG CHAIRMAN OR OTHER KEY OFFICIAL, AND FOR THAT PUR-
POSE I WILL LIKE TO USE SOME STRONG FORMULA, WHICH I HOPE DEPT
WILL SUPPLY SOONEST. I WOULD SUGGEST "VERY SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR
US RELATIONS AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS" OR SOMETHING SIMILAR, BOTH
BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE ACCURATE AND BECAUSE VERY TOUGH-MINDED DIRG
IS NOT LIKELY TO BE IMPRESSED BY Milder FORMULA.
HUMMEL

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